

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Las Vegas Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plans to dispose of BLM managed land in the Las Vegas Valley, consistent with the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA), as amended by the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 (Clark County Act). The BLM administers federal public land in small and large parcels interspersed among private land in the Las Vegas metropolitan area and in significant federal land holdings surrounding the Las Vegas Valley. These interspersed parcels are difficult for federal management and thus are more appropriate for disposal and management by local governments. In addition, the demand for federal land by local governments and private parties has exceeded expectations. Thus the United States (U.S.) Congress passed the SNPLMA legislation authorizing the BLM to dispose of federal land in Clark County, Nevada consistent with community land use plans and policies.

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared by the BLM pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality. The EIS identifies the environmental consequences that may result from the disposal and use of all remaining BLM managed lands within the disposal boundary area and identifies methods to avoid, minimize, and mitigate, as appropriate, for potential adverse impacts. This document also presents a record of consultation, coordination, and cooperation with other interested parties during the EIS preparation. To assist the public and decision makers review, this EIS is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 discusses the purpose and need for the land disposal.
- Chapter 2 describes the Proposed Action and alternatives including the No Action Alternative. A brief discussion of the alternatives considered but eliminated is also provided in this chapter.

- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the existing (baseline) environmental conditions within the disposal boundary area and the potentially affected environment.
- Chapter 4 addresses the potential environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action and alternatives described in Chapter 2 when compared to baseline conditions presented in Chapter 3. Cumulative effects and mitigation measure associated with the Proposed Action and alternatives are also discussed in Chapter 4.
- Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 presents Consultation and Coordination, References, List of Preparers, Distribution List, Glossary, and Index, respectively.

Appendices provide additional technical support data.

ES.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

The Las Vegas metropolitan area is one of the fastest growing urban areas in the U.S. Population growth since 1995 has exceeded projections and growth is anticipated to continue along this upward trend into the future. Population growth for the Las Vegas Valley is projected to increase from 1.69 million in 2004 to 2.48 million by 2018.

The BLM managed lands in the Las Vegas Valley are being surrounded by more urbanized private lands thus making it difficult for the BLM to properly manage federal lands. Disposal would allow local governments to control, manage, and regulate the future uses of these lands. The land disposal action would also make the public lands available for use by local governments for public purposes or for purchase at auction to accommodate the rapid urban development in the Las Vegas Valley.

Congress enacted SNPLMA to address concerns over federal management of lands in an urbanizing area. The SNPLMA authorizes the BLM to

dispose of approximately 52,000 acres of public land located within a specific boundary in the Las Vegas Valley. Shortly after approval of SNPLMA, the BLM experienced a rapid increase in the requests for public land disposal.

Title IV of the Clark County Act amended SNPLMA to increase the disposal boundary area and the amount of land available for disposal by approximately 22,000 acres. The adjustment to the disposal boundary was made to address the continuing rapid increase in the growth in Las Vegas and demand for land for development.

ES.2 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

This EIS analyzes the potential impacts of three alternatives: the Proposed Action, the Conservation Transfer Alternative, and the No Action Alternative. The alternatives evaluated in this EIS were developed based on the requirements of SNPLMA as amended by the Clark County Act, and the requirements of NEPA.

ES.2.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is that all BLM land within the disposal boundary area would be available for disposal unless the transfer would violate a law, such as the Endangered Species Act. There are 46,701 acres of BLM land within the disposal boundary area that would be available for transfer. Of this amount, the BLM estimates that 40,232 acres are available for transfer or sale under SNPLMA after the lands leased and reserved for Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) are removed (6,469 acres as of March 2004). On average, approximately 4,000 acres of land per year are expected to be auctioned with disposal being completed by 2015. Approximately 1,330 acres per year of disposal lands would be developed resulting in slightly less than 20,000 acres of new development through 2018.

Although the historic rate of disposal has averaged 4,000 acres per year since the first auction in 1999, it is anticipated that upwards of 10,000 acres may be nominated for auction in each of the next few years. This greater amount is primarily

because of the market interest in large contiguous tracts of land for development and the estimated land values.

The BLM would continue to implement realty actions to support the transfer of land and orderly development in the disposal area, consistent with community land use plans. Realty actions include the issuance of right-of-way (ROW) grants and R&PP leases. There are currently 6,469 acres of land within the disposal boundary area held or reserved by public entities and nonprofit organizations for R&PP leases. Approximately 1,700 acres are projected to be leased for R&PP purposes through 2015. The ROWs granted on an annual average basis total approximately 1,300 acres. Approximately 5,000 acres are projected to be granted for ROW purposes through 2015.

ES.2.2 Conservation Transfer Alternative

The Conservation Transfer Alternative is similar to the Proposed Action except that approximately 5,000 acres of land have been identified as a Conservation Transfer Area. The Conservation Transfer Area was established based on the unique paleontological resources, cultural resources, and special status plant species that were located during the field surveys conducted within the disposal boundary area.

Land within the Conservation Transfer Area may be nominated for transfer to local or regional government agencies using the same process as the other disposal lands. However, the BLM would not transfer title to any lands within the Conservation Transfer Area until a Conservation Agreement is signed by all parties. The agencies would be required to manage the lands consistent with the approved Conservation Agreement to ensure protection of sensitive resources. The BLM would establish an inter-agency steering committee to address options on how best to conserve the sensitive resource values within the Conservation Transfer Area yet fulfill the intent of SNPLMA and meet the land development expectations of local governments.

Approximately 41,700 acres of BLM managed lands in the disposal boundary area (excluding the

Conservation Area) would be transferred at an annual average rate of 4,000 acres per year, with remaining available land completely transferred by 2015. It is also projected that nearly 17,500 acres of development would occur on BLM lands disposed from 2004 through 2018.

The BLM would continue to implement realty actions under the Conservation Transfer Alternative. Approximately 1,200 acres is projected to be R&PP leases and eventually transferred for public purposes to the leaseholder. Approximately 3,600 acres are projected to be covered by ROW grants and eventually transferred.

ES.2.3 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative is based on the existing management direction specified in the 1998 Las Vegas Resource Management Plan (RMP)/EIS. The Record of Decision for the RMP/EIS identified 52,021 acres available for disposal in the Las Vegas Valley. The RMP projected that up to 25,540 acres in the Las Vegas Valley Disposal Area would be sold during the 20-year planning period through 2018.

Under the management direction prescribed in the RMP, the BLM would continue to implement realty actions in the disposal area consistent with the multiple-use directive of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The BLM would continue to grant ROWs to allow access across BLM administered lands for infrastructure and conveyances including roads, power lines, pipelines, and flood control structures. Rights-of-way would be granted to allow access for development on private lands where access across BLM land is needed for development of private property. It is estimated that approximately 1,300 acres of ROW grants and 440 acres of R&PP leases would be granted over the next few years to support development of previously disposed lands.

ES.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The environmental consequences the Proposed Action, Conservation Transfer Alternative, and

No Action Alternative could have on various environmental, socioeconomic, and land use program areas were identified. The analysis of the alternatives focuses on identifying types of impacts and estimating their potential significance. Direct environmental impacts associated with the alternatives for land disposal are caused by land use activities that would occur subsequent to disposal. The disposal action and subsequent transfer of title do not have direct impacts because these administrative actions do not cause any change in the environment. The transfer of title would directly impact users of the land (i.e., non-environmental impacts) in the resource areas of recreation, range management, and hazardous materials. Once land is disposed, development activities would be undertaken by the new owners that would not have occurred if the land remained under BLM management; therefore, impacts related to changes in land use after development are indirect impacts of the land disposal action. A brief summary of the potential impacts is presented in the following paragraphs.

ES.3.1 Air Quality

The analysis of air quality impacts for this EIS was based on the results of a comprehensive study completed by the BLM. The BLM obtained the services of Argonne National Laboratory (Argonne) to perform cumulative air quality modeling to provide a quantitative assessment of future air quality trends in the Las Vegas Valley. The analysis focused on projected emissions of the non-attainment parameters (PM₁₀, carbon monoxide [CO], and ozone precursors).

No Action Alternative: No additional land transfers would be authorized by the BLM under the No Action Alternative; therefore, no further air quality impacts from land disposal actions would occur. Any ongoing development of previously disposed BLM lands would contribute to cumulative emissions.

The ROW grants and R&PP leases would continue to be issued to support development on the BLM lands that have already been disposed and on other private lands. Air quality impacts resulting from these realty actions are considered direct impacts. The PM₁₀ emissions from land distur-

bance would be the only emissions that can be distinguished from other ongoing activities in the area, which are considered in cumulative impacts. The air quality (primarily PM₁₀ and CO) impacts from construction for infrastructure facilities requiring ROW grants were based on the projected amount of surface disturbance and emission factors. Emissions are estimated on an overall emission rate of 0.265 tons of PM₁₀ per acre per month developed by Argonne and emission rates for CO based on emission factors of typical construction equipment.

Based on emission estimates, individual ROW grants and associated construction activities would not be subjected to the requirement of a conformity analysis under the PM₁₀ or CO State Implementation Plans (SIPs), as that analysis is required for actions that have projected emissions greater than 70 tons of PM₁₀ per year and 100 tons of CO per year. However, ROWs and R&PP lease applications for BLM lands outside the SIP boundary would be subject to individual review to ensure emission limits of the SIP are not exceeded pending the revision of the SIP to include the expanded BLM disposal boundary area. Assuming 1,300 acres for ROWs and 440 acres for R&PP leases are disturbed in a year, a total of approximately 1.3 tons of PM₁₀ would be emitted per day (based on 462 tons per year using the emission rate described above). Thus emission rates for activities related to realty actions currently represent less than 1 percent of the total controlled PM₁₀ emissions (199.25 tons per day) developed for the PM₁₀ SIP.

A quantitative estimate of future realty actions and related land disturbance under the No Action Alternative for projected activities beyond 2006 cannot be made from available information, but would probably be much lower than the rate of realty actions and associated activity under alternatives that include ongoing land disposal.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: The projected difference between the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative (approximately 40,000 tons per year in 2018) reflects the relative contribution of disposal-related emissions to the cumulative emission rates in the area. The Argonne study developed esti-

mates of disposal and overall emission projections for the non-attainment area based on population growth and cumulative development rates, existing emission sources, and projected efficiencies of emission controls.

These projections indicate that disposal-related construction and operation emissions would average approximately 17 percent of the total emissions for Clark County. The total emissions estimated (132,900 tons per year) would be below the controlled PM₁₀ emissions of 138,683 tons per year established in the SIP. The projected emissions for each alternative are based on projected emission inventories for construction and operation emissions, including implementation of control measures to the degree documented in 1998.

Existing monitoring data, projected emissions increases, and model results indicate that CO would continue to be in compliance with SIP requirements for this pollutant. The projections of CO emissions for the Proposed Action indicate that emissions related to development of lands disposed by BLM increase to just over 23,000 tons by 2006. The level of CO emissions from disposal-related sources is projected to increase to 38,000 tons in 2018, while other Clark County emissions are estimated at over 268,000 tons at that time.

Because the area is in non-attainment, a SIP would be required for ozone, including proposed control measures for existing and new emission sources in order to reach attainment in the future. The current projections show ozone precursor compound emissions in the region in 2006 would be similar to the emissions inventories performed for 2000 and significant reductions in nitrogen oxides would occur by 2018, reflecting the closure of the Mojave Generating plant.

The results of the Argonne study indicated that the increase in the maximum 1-hour O₃ concentration would be no more than 0.003 parts per million (ppm) in 2006 and 0.011 ppm in 2018. The highest predicted baseline (2000) 1-hour average O₃ concentration was 0.091 ppm, thus the projected increases from the Proposed Action in 2006 and 2018 would still be below the 1-hour standard of 0.12 ppm. Preliminary results of the Argonne

study estimate a peak increase of 0.09 ppm in the 8-hour O₃ standard concentrations from 2000 (baseline) to 2018 with this peak isolated in areas north and west of the center of Las Vegas. It is expected that the average increase would be less than 0.02 to 0.06 ppm over most areas within and adjacent to the disposal boundary area primarily due to the effect of EPA's national new clean engine standards. The results of the Argonne air quality study indicated that the increase in the maximum 1-hour O₃ concentration would be no more than 0.003 parts per million (ppm) in 2006 and 0.011 ppm in 2018. The highest predicted baseline (2000) 1-hour average O₃ concentration was 0.091 ppm, thus the projected increases from the Proposed Action in 2006 and 2018 would still be below the 1-hour standard of 0.12 ppm.

The Argonne study estimated increased sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions based on an estimated electricity consumption of 36,000 KWh per year per household, while data from Nevada Power indicated that typical consumption in the area is 12,000 KWh per year per household. More representative emission rates for electricity generation for residential use will be incorporated in the revised model being prepared by Argonne and presented in the Final EIS. The SO₂ emissions are projected to decrease by over 80 percent from 2000 levels by 2018. This decrease in total emissions is related to closure of the Mojave plant.

The relatively small difference between the conservation transfer and full development emission rates, along with larger cumulative emissions from sources outside disposed lands, all indicate that the overall trends in air quality under the Conservation Transfer Alternative would be similar to those projected for the Proposed Action.

ES.3.2 Earth Resources

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would continue the exclusion of new locatable mineral development on lands within the disposal boundary area, but would recognize prior existing rights. Thus no additional impacts to mineral or geologic resources are expected from those areas identified in the RMP. The status of existing claims would be evaluated when a claimant develops a proposal for establishing an opera-

tion or files a patent on any claims within the disposal area. Excess stockpiles of sand and gravel generated during construction authorized by ROW grants and R&PP leases would continue to be made available through free use permits or sales. There are no economically viable locatable or leasable minerals located within the disposal boundary area.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer

Alternatives: Subject to valid existing rights, lands within the disposal boundary area are withdrawn from entry and mineral resource development. However, there are no economically viable locatable or leasable minerals located within the disposal boundary area, thus no direct or indirect impacts to either action alternative are expected from subsequent development.

No new sand and gravel operations would be developed within the disposal boundary area under the Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternative. The impact of removing salable minerals for development would be insignificant because there are abundant sand and gravel resources throughout the Southern Nevada area.

Steep slopes and unstable areas along the Las Vegas Wash may present geologic hazards; however, development in this area would be required to address any associated hazards and would be required to avoid the floodplain. Development and the associated construction activities would not directly affect subsidence.

Lands would potentially be subjected to increased erosion during construction and post-development changes in soil conditions that affect vegetation types. Undeveloped lands would not experience any changes in soil conditions until development occurs in those areas. Developed areas typically experience less soil erosion from wind than undeveloped areas. Therefore, following completion of construction activities, soil erosion from wind would be minimal.

ES.3.3 Water Resources

No Action Alternative: Water resource impacts would be related to ROW grants and R&PP leases issued to support development of previously dis-

posed lands. Developers would be required to comply with Section 401, 402 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, thus minimizing impacts to water resources.

Additional public lands would not be disposed under this alternative and thus no additional revenue from the sale of these lands would be generated. Therefore, the funds that would be allocated to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) for identification and development of additional water sources would not be available.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: Under both action alternatives, adverse impacts to water quality may result from accidental spills and increased erosion of disturbed soils during construction activities. However, erosion and sediment transport would be relatively insignificant and similar to surface water passing over unpaved roads that exist throughout the disposal boundary area. Construction and development may result in alteration of the land surface including modification or elimination of ephemeral drainages within the Las Vegas Valley. Implementation of best management practices required by storm water construction permitting would ensure that runoff during construction does not adversely impact water quality. Developers would be required to comply with construction storm water discharge permits and the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit, Section 401 certification, and Section 402 (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting program), thus minimizing impacts to water resources.

In areas of very shallow groundwater, there is the potential that groundwater would be encountered and intercepted during excavation of trenches for underground pipelines and utilities. Dewatering may result in lower discharge for some domestic water wells, derogation of spring sources, and changing the Las Vegas Wash from a discharge point of groundwater to a recharge source for the shallow aquifer. Recharging the groundwater aquifer with untreated nuisance flows from urban runoff would contribute to the deterioration of groundwater quality in the shallow aquifer. In addition, excessive dewatering may cause subsidence.

The Proposed Action would result in an eventual water demand increase of nearly 50,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) by 2018, with this additional demand continuing into the future. The Conservation Transfer Alternative would result in an eventual water demand increase of 43,750 AFY. However, these projected increases do not consider potential water conservation measures that SNWA would attempt to achieve during this period. The SNWA has averaged a 12 percent reduction in water use because of drought conservation measures, but given the persistent drought conditions and higher water demands, SNWA and its member agencies are developing a regional strategic plan to meet a goal of 25 percent reduction by 2010. Thus, water consumption would likely be much less than anticipated.

ES.3.4 Biological Resources

No Action Alternative: No additional lands would be disposed under this alternative, the extent of impact would not likely be significant as the need for ROWs and R&PPs would be much less than anticipated with the action alternatives. The exact amount of disturbance cannot be quantified, as the locations of ROWs and R&PP leases are unknown. Surface disturbing activities for construction of ROWs and R&PP facilities and land development activities would cause direct mortality and/or displacement of individual plants and animals; direct loss and fragmentation of habitat; and increased potential for illegal kills and harassment of wildlife. Any disturbance to the Las Vegas bearpoppy or Las Vegas buckwheat would likely result in a long-term loss and permanent reduction of their habitat.

In 2001 the USFWS determined that the proposed disposal of up to 125,000 acres of BLM lands (121,000 acres of suitable habitat and 4,000 acres of previously disturbed and no longer suitable desert tortoise habitat) would represent a loss of approximately 4 percent of the 4,900 square miles of desert tortoise habitat estimated to occur in Clark County. Effects on desert tortoises within the Las Vegas Valley represent a small impact to the Mojave population when total desert tortoise population numbers and geographical extent are considered.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer

Alternatives: Surface disturbing activities for construction of ROWs and R&PP facilities and land development activities would cause direct mortality and/or displacement of individual plants and animals; direct loss and fragmentation of habitat; and increased potential for illegal kills and harassment of wildlife.

Private parties would impact the Las Vegas bearpoppy, Las Vegas buckwheat, two-tone penstemon, and the acacia/mesquite bosque habitat through direct habitat loss, additional habitat fragmentation, and individual species mortality from development after the BLM lands are sold. Approximately 60 acres of bearpoppy habitat, 600 acres of buckwheat habitat, and seven sites with limited numbers of penstemon populations may be impacted by the land sale action. Because of the sensitivity of the plants to surface disturbance and limited success in transplanting and reestablishing the plants, development would result in a long-term loss and permanent reduction of their habitat. The Conservation Transfer Alternative would protect a portion of the plants and habitat of the bearpoppy and buckwheat.

Approximately 41,500 acres of desert tortoise habitat that may support approximately 1,000 desert tortoises would be affected by complete development within the disposal boundary area. However, effects on desert tortoises within the Las Vegas Valley represent a small impact to the Mojave population of the desert tortoise when total population numbers and geographical extent are considered.

Approximately 850-1,000 acres of mesquite/acacia habitat located primarily in the north and southwest would likely be lost to future development. The significance of the impact to wildlife species occurring in this habitat, including migratory birds and the sensitive phainopepla, burrowing owl, and desert tortoise would depend on the availability of similar habitat on adjacent undeveloped private and public lands. The Conservation Transfer Area would preserve approximately a third of that habitat.

ES.3.5 Cultural Resources

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would have a direct beneficial impact on cultural resource sites within the disposal boundary area, as there would be no change in land use or loss of resource protection on BLM lands. There would be the potential for adverse indirect impacts from vandalism, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in the area, and other ground disturbing activities. However, the management directions in the RMP would continue to address the data recovery and conservation of cultural resource sites potentially impacted by recreational uses and federal actions.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer

Alternatives: The continued disposal of BLM lands would not directly impact cultural resources but subsequent development of the lands would have adverse impacts to any cultural resources located on those lands. There are nine sites within the Proposed Action disposal boundary area that were determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Tule Springs National Register Site, of which approximately 660 acres are located on BLM lands available for disposal. The administrative transfer of title and ownership would have no direct effect to sites but an adverse effect is assumed for purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Known cultural resources sites would be avoided or mitigated thus any direct adverse impacts associated with construction of ROWs and facilities requiring R&PP leases would be insignificant.

The BLM would prepare a Historic Properties Treatment Plan in consultation with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) that would govern the identification and application of mitigation measures at such time as lands are nominated for sale or transfer.

There are two sites determined eligible for listing on the NRHP that are within or cross through the Conservation Transfer Area. These sites would be protected because of the restricted type of future development that could occur without impacting the resources. The Tule Springs site would be

protected from development by the NRHP designation and would also benefit from this alternative.

ES.3.6 Native American Resources

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would have a direct beneficial impact on Native American resources within the disposal boundary area that are located on BLM lands as there would be no change in land use or loss of resource protection. The Southern Paiute villages and garden farm sites that are likely located within the disposal boundary area would not be impacted. However, the exact locations of these habitation sites are unknown thus the sites could still be impacted from ongoing development on private lands.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: The BLM consulted with 15 Native American tribes that are located in the vicinity of the Las Vegas Valley or that have a cultural affiliation with the area. The tribes did not provide comments regarding the presence or significance of any traditional cultural site within or adjacent to the disposal boundary area that could be affected by the land disposal action. There are no traditional cultural properties identified within the disposal boundary area; therefore, no direct or indirect adverse impacts would be anticipated. The BLM consulted with the SHPO regarding these findings and the SHPO concurred with the BLM that the efforts to identify properties of religious and traditional cultural significance were adequate.

ES.3.7 Paleontological Resources

No Action Alternative: The management directions in the RMP address the potential for extraction or preservation of scientific data. However, because of encroaching development, there would be indirect impacts from increased public access to the areas with paleontological resources. Paleontological resources exposed at the surface are vulnerable to vandalism, off-highway vehicle use in the area, and other ground disturbing activities. These indirect impacts would be adverse and po-

tentially significant if the fossils are permanently lost.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer

Alternative: The administrative transfer of title and ownership of BLM lands would not create any direct adverse impacts to paleontologic resources. However, should development occur on and require the destruction or removal of sensitive paleontologic resources by non-qualified paleontologists, significant indirect adverse impacts and a unique loss to paleontological resources would occur.

Under the Proposed Action, development would have potential significant adverse impacts to 438 previously unrecorded paleontological resources, if not first recovered by qualified paleontologists, as high density development would likely result in a permanent loss of the resource. Ground disturbance associated with developments would also impact those yet undiscovered fossils in the subsurface.

Under the Conservation Transfer Alternative the BLM would exclude certain parcels from consideration for disposal, or may consider transfer mechanisms that restrict subsequent use of individual properties to protect certain resources. This would provide for long-term permanent preservation of the paleontologic resources and associated environment.

ES.3.8 Visual Resources

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, no further BLM lands would be sold; therefore, no significant direct impacts to visual resources would occur. The ROWs and R&PP leases for utilities and public use would continue to be granted by the BLM. Power, gas, and water lines may be constructed that would have temporary visual impacts during the construction activities. However, the location of utility lines would be restricted based on the guidelines of the RMP, the land use plan for the area, and in accordance with the Visual Resource Management classification.

The ROWs and R&PP leases for utilities and public use would continue to be granted by the BLM. Power, gas, and water lines may be constructed that would have temporary visual impacts during the construction activities. However, the location of utility lines would be restricted based on the guidelines of the RMP, the land use plan for the area, and the VRM classification guidelines.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: The transfer of land ownership would not directly affect the existing visual resources but the subsequent development of the disposed lands would have an impact. Under the Proposed Action, the existing natural environment would be transformed into residential, commercial, and industrial land uses in accordance with local land use plans. The BLM lands directly adjacent to Red Rock Canyon would be more sensitive in terms of changes to the visual character of the landscape than parcels located in other areas of the Valley. The land sale actions and subsequent development would not cause a significant adverse indirect impact to visual resources as there would be no substantial changes to the overall visual character of the region because of ongoing development.

Impacts resulting from the Conservation Transfer Alternative would be similar to those described for the Proposed Action but less land would be intensely developed in the northern portion of the Valley and thus fewer visual resources would be affected.

ES.3.9 Land Use

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would substantially conflict with local community land use plans and goals, which would be a significant indirect impact to land use. The scattered pattern of land ownership would continue to fragment the landscape and land use, having a direct adverse impact on the management of these lands. Requests for R&PP leases and ROWs would be granted provided the requests are compatible with the governing agency's land use plan for the area, thus no significant impact would be anticipated.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: The Proposed Action land sale nomination and selection process and local permitting requirements would ensure that development of the lands would be consistent with community land use plans and zoning requirements. Development of parcels sold would change the existing land use from predominately vacant lands to residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. However, this would not be a significant impact because development would not conflict with land use plans and community goals.

The Conservation Transfer Alternative would have an indirect adverse impact on land use planning by the local communities, particularly the cities of North Las Vegas and Las Vegas. The location and orientation of the Conservation Transfer Area could fragment the future development of communities. This would be a significant impact because it conflicts with community goals.

ES.3.10 Recreation and Wilderness

No Action Alternative: The BLM lands within the disposal boundary area would remain open and available for dispersed recreation uses under the No Action Alternative. The released wilderness study areas in the northern part of the disposal boundary area would be available for other dispersed uses, such as motorized recreation pending land management decisions by the BLM. No additional land sales would have an indirect adverse impact on recreation opportunities by eliminating the source of funding for recreation purposes and improvements.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: Under the Proposed Action disposal and development of lands would eliminate the public access to BLM lands historically used for recreation, having an indirect adverse impact to the user. Funds received through the SNPLMA special account would be applied to develop trails throughout the Las Vegas Valley and for improvements at adjacent recreation areas, having a beneficial impact on recreation opportunities.

The Conservation Transfer Area in the northern part of the disposal boundary area would be main-

tained as open space with limited compatible recreation development for trails and interpretive activities. This would be a beneficial impact for the recreational user by maintaining the open space and improving the recreational value of the area.

ES.3.11 Hazardous Materials

No Action Alternative: There are no direct impacts from hazardous materials associated with the No Action alternative. The abundance of dump piles and miscellaneous debris on BLM managed lands may increase as the population of the Las Vegas Valley continues to increase and development encroaches closer to BLM lands. However, dump piles of predominantly household and landscaping waste and construction debris are generally not hazardous and do not present a significant environmental concern.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: The presence of hazardous materials on BLM lands would have a direct impact to the sale of land and transfer of title. The extent and significance of any impacts would be dependent upon the extent of the contamination. Under the Proposed Action, there were five recognized environmental conditions (RECs) identified that are recommended for further investigation prior to transfer of title or designation for some other use, such as R&PP. There is one REC identified in the Conservation Transfer area that may require further investigation prior to title transfer.

Potential future indirect impacts associated with hazardous materials would include items such as lubricants, oils, cooling fluids, and diesel fuel used during construction activities on lands after title is transferred. Spills and releases of hazardous substances would be likely, but the quantity and type of substance cannot be determined. The significance of indirect impacts associated with these activities is not known.

ES.3.12 Socioeconomics

No Action Alternative: No additional land sale revenue would be received under the No Action Alternative thus no additional funds would be

available for the Clark County School District, SNWA, and for the acquisition, conservation, and maintenance of environmentally sensitive lands and recreation areas.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: Under both alternatives, the land sale action would generate positive economic and employment benefits. Land development activities associated with the BLM land sales would be due to the construction of residential, commercial, and industrial developments. There would be an increase of at least 2 percent in annual employment and a total economic output of approximately \$1.4 billion annually. Based on the projected land development, approximately \$320 million in tax revenue would be generated annually. Annual revenue from the land sales could exceed \$376 million and would be available to the Clark County School District, SNWA, and for the acquisition, conservation, and maintenance of environmentally sensitive lands and recreation areas based on provisions of SNPLMA.

ES.3.13 Environmental Justice

No Action Alternative: No environmental justice (EJ) populations were identified. The construction industry employs minority and low-income workers. There could be potential indirect impacts to these workers if construction would decrease over the planning period but any indirect impact would be insignificant because growth in the Valley and development on available private land is not projected to significantly decrease.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: There were no EJ populations identified in the disposal boundary area that would be disproportionately impacted by continued land sales. The construction industry employs minority and low-income workers thus subsequent development anticipated to occur on the disposed BLM lands could have potential indirect beneficial impacts to these workers. However any indirect impact would be insignificant because growth in the Valley and development on available private land is not projected to significantly decrease.

ES.3.14 Range Management

No Action Alternative: The management direction in the RMP for livestock grazing was to close all land disposal areas to grazing, thus any adverse direct impact on the operator of the Hidden Valley allotment would be insignificant.

Proposed Action and Conservation Transfer Alternatives: Under both action alternatives, land disposal for urban and residential development would result in the permanent loss of about 3,000 acres of ephemeral range in the Hidden Valley grazing allotment. This would be insignificant because the lands are ephemeral range with low forage production. Disposal of the BLM lands within the Hidden Valley allotment would not result in an adverse impact to livestock operations and the permittee would not experience any financial profit or loss because no range improvements, such as water sources have been made on the lands within the disposal boundary area.

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